



## National Environmental Treasure

### Statement of Operating Principles

#### as of December 1999

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### Mission Statement

The National Environmental Treasure (the NET) is a people's trust devoted to the exclusive funding of Canadian environmental organizations (ENGOS). The direct beneficiaries of the trust fund will be community-based as well as nationally-oriented environmental groups who will receive funding to increase their core capacity in key areas such as public education, communications and infrastructure activities.

### Operating Principles

Environmental non-governmental groups (ENGOS) are loosely defined as not-for-profit organizations whose primary mandate deals with the environment or sustainable development. The environment as a concept is taken holistically, however, and may include wider linkages, such as health and the environment, as well as equity issues such as gender and the environment, and social issues such as violence and abuse against women and animals. With respect to its funding, the following principles are applied.

1. **Inclusivity**, as it relates to gender, geographic representativity, language and minority groups.
2. **Transparency**, in that all its operations are open and transparent to the public.
3. **Partnerships**, wherever possible funding allocations will stimulate strategic and creative partnerships between environmental groups, between sectors, such as the research and non-governmental communities.
4. **Coordination and cooperation**. Fundraising and advertising campaigns will not compete with those of other groups, and in all cases, the NET will work with local and regional groups in its own campaign activities.
5. **Walking our talk**. Within its own operating procedures and administration, the NET will strive to mirror its operating principles, particularly with respect to leaving local capacity with whatever groups and associations with whom it works.
6. **Diversity**. Wherever functional, diversity in staffing and funding allocations will be the norm.



## Funding Criteria

The funding criteria have been developed in conjunction with the NET Advisory Board, a representative grouping of ENGOs from across the country. They are subject to approval by the Board of Directors, and will evolve as the organization matures. These criteria will be fully evaluated every five years to ensure consistency with the core operating principles and working objectives which will be defined yearly.

1. Funding is exclusively for Canadian ENGOs for capacity building. Capacity building includes, but is not limited to the following:
  - environmental education;
  - public communications;
  - training and development;
  - professional development such as marketing and fundraising workshops;
  - hardware and software, particularly with respect to improving financial and administrative systems;
  - hiring of students between terms, and
  - research and development of improved operational models for the non-governmental community.
2. Only those groups that have a non-profit and charitable status are eligible to apply.
3. Any one ENGO can only be funded for a maximum of five years, after which, they are considered to have had sufficient opportunity to build internal capacity.
4. There is no project funding available.
5. In certain cases, when a number of applicants identify the same need, for example, training in project proposal writing, the NET staff may decide to organize the workshops on behalf of a number of groups.
6. The NET staff will maintain a cadre of retired public servants and businesspeople with expertise in marketing, administrative and financial systems, who are prepared to volunteer their time to ENGOS, for referral to applicants who identify these gaps.
7. Accountability reports will be submitted following a two-period, documenting the new internal capacities as well as plans for sustaining that capacity over the long-term.
8. Any groups that do not meet the funding criteria will be encouraged to partner with groups that do.
9. Some risk will be incurred by supporting start-up groups, particularly at the community level. Twenty-five percent of funding annually will be devoted to groups that are considered higher-risk than more traditionally established groups, particularly when they can demonstrate that they are filling a unique niche and have the leadership capacity to succeed.
10. A balance will be struck between the funding of local, regional and national groups, to be determined yearly by the Board of Directors.
11. A balance will also be struck between the funding of small, medium and large-sized groups, to be determined yearly by the Board of Directors.



12. Groups with a budget of over 1 million dollars will not normally be considered for funding, unless they partner with a small or medium sized group.
13. The Board of Directors will issue a yearly statement providing a rationale for their funding decisions for that year.

### **Administrative Procedures**

1. Administrative overhead will never exceed more than 10 percent of gross revenues.
2. Wherever possible, administrative and financial systems will be contracted out in order to keep the central functions as small as possible, with an emphasis on volunteer participation in the local operations of nationally-directed campaigns.
3. A small cadre of professional staff will be maintained whose main purpose is to manage the national campaigns, administer the NET operations, actively communicate with the ENGO community, travelling to the groups to ensure an accurate knowledge of capabilities and needs, and to serve as the Secretariat to the Board and disburse funds.
4. Staff will also serve in an advisory capacity to its clients, both in advising on making applications, and monitoring throughout the funding period.
5. Discretionary funding will be given to staff for funding requests up to \$10,000 (with quarterly reports made to the Board of Directors).
6. Applications over \$10,000 must be approved by the Board of Directors.
7. Quorum for the Board of Directors includes two-thirds of its members. There are to be no substitutes for participation.
8. Anyone who sits on the Board of Directors and their respective organizations are ineligible for funding during their term of office.
9. Similarly, NET staff cannot sit on any outside Boards or volunteer with any ENGO groups during their term of employment.
10. The criteria for funding will be re-evaluated every 3 years, concurrent with a full evaluation of the program to date, involving client groups, staff and the Board of Directors.
11. The application process will be as streamlined and straightforward as possible, recognizing prudence and probity.